

THE WARSAW PACT AND NATO:

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Two Radically Different Alliances

The Soviets' success so far in their campaign to equate the Warsaw Pact (WP) with NATO has been aptly termed a "victory in semantics." To accept the two organizations as equal is to ignore the wide differences in the alliances' origins, structure, functions, control mechanisms, and leadership. A more serious error is to applaud (or even to consider) the proposals that, as *quid pro quo* both alliances be disbanded in the interests of a "lessening of tensions" and the achievement of "all-European" security. For the Soviets, this "exchange" would impose little or no sacrifice: the WP is only one of a number of means by which the Soviets control the East European countries. Of greater concern to the NATO countries is the risk, as pointed out in BPG #188 ("In Defense of NATO") and recently emphasized by USG leaders, that the disbanding of the alliance would be a step backward to shifting entente systems which have in the past proven to be inadequate to preserve international security and justice.

The essential differences between NATO and the WP are in their origins, functions, and leadership:

a) Whereas NATO was carefully worked out in 1949 after several years of hope-inspired work for a viable European peace had been thwarted by Soviet intransigence, hostile acts, and threatening military gestures coupled with efforts to use home-grown but Moscow-directed CP's to gain political dominance in West European countries, the WP blossomed almost overnight in response to West Germany's entry into NATO in 1955.

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b) Whereas NATO took form almost at inception and produced a Western solidarity which is credited with helping soon thereafter to bring about the end of the Berlin Blockade, the end of the Soviet-assisted Communist insurrection in Greece 6 months later, and also the reduction of Soviet pressure on Western Europe during the year leading up to the Korean War, the WP was a formality which was used immediately as a basis for keeping Soviet troops in Hungary and Rumania after the signing of the Austrian State Treaty, and later was used by the USSR to secure Bloc unanimity after Imre Nagy threatened in 1956 to withdraw Hungary from the Pact.

c) Whereas NATO's military and political posts have been placed under the leadership of representatives from a number of member nations and the North Atlantic Council has met frequently,\* the WP's posts have been monopolized by the USSR, and the Political Consultative Committee (PCC) has met only 7 times, or one third as frequently as the minimum decided upon at the PCC meeting in January 1956.

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The differences between the alliances are further magnified when attention is directed to the situation which would probably emerge if both alliances were disbanded. For NATO this would untie many of the significant bonds and agreements which member nations have developed since 1949. More important, it would dilute the power which has stood up to the Soviets' persistent pressure and intermittent attempts to encroach on Western Europe during the last 17 years.

For the WP countries the disbanding of the alliance would change little. The Soviets would still be able to exercise substantial control over the East European countries by political, military, ideological, economic, and police means. Politically, the USSR and each of the East European nations are bound bilaterally by 20-year, renewable treaties of Friendship and Mutual Assistance. These treaties, originally entered into in 1945-48 and renewed when due, commit the signers to mutual defense against aggression, particularly aggression by a rearmed German state. A further strengthening of military ties was accomplished without reference to the WP through bilateral treaties of 1956 and 1957 permitting the USSR to station troops in Poland, East Germany, Rumania, and Hungary.\*\* Ideological and CP ties of East European leaders to Moscow and the world

\*For example, the Permanent Representatives of NATO met, as scheduled, an average of 70 times a year between 1950 and 1960.

\*\*Earlier treaties permitting the USSR to station troops in Hungary and Rumania did make reference to the WP; but such references were not repeated.

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communist movement would remain unaffected by changes in the WP. As stressed on 6 June 1966 by Premier Gyula Kallai of Hungary, "proletarian internationalism" is the strongest "binding link" among the countries of the socialist world system. Economically, most of the countries are strongly bound or beholden to the USSR in spite of the present weakness of the Bloc's Council of Mutual Economic Assistance (CEMA, or Comecon). The countries' economic systems are similar and to an extent they are meshed. Also important is the fact that most of the East European countries have difficulty in finding outlets for trade in the West because of the generally low quality of their production. Finally, collaboration in the exercise of police controls is of great potential significance.\* Laszlo Szabo, who defected from the Hungarian security service after 20 years, revealed how the Soviets' KGB has trained Hungarian security personnel and coordinated the Hungarian program with its own, and how the KGB has officers at the top and departmental levels of its Hungarian counterpart, the AVH. Presumably, the Soviets have similar arrangements with the other East European countries and can expect to maintain them with or without the WP.

Since the WP cannot be equated with NATO, it may be asked why the Soviets hint in their propaganda -- in spite of their announced policy of strengthening the WP -- that they would abolish the WP in return for the abolition of NATO? One speculation, in the light of difficulties they are having in operating the WP is that the Soviets are trying to make a virtue of necessity. That is, they may soon be obliged to make significant changes in the WP and are trying to get something from the West beforehand.

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Problems in the WP appear to stem from the inability of the Soviets to obtain unanimity from the member countries. (It will be recalled that it was the Soviets who first insisted on WP unanimity during the Hungarian Revolution). Rumania's increasingly independent stance [redacted] apparently has had considerable bearing on developments at: the WP defense ministers' meeting in Moscow in May; the WP foreign ministers' meeting in Moscow in the first part of June; and the meeting at the same time in East Berlin of virtually the entire top command of the Soviet armed forces with defense leaders of East Germany, Czechoslovakia, and Poland.

Although it has been reported (see Press Comment 20 June 66) that Rumania was reprimanded at the unusually long foreign ministers' meeting in Moscow, and speculated that the Northern Tier countries (East Germany, Czechoslovakia, Poland) are being forged into a special military force, little firm evidence is at hand. A clearer picture may emerge from the

\*It is estimated that militarized security forces of the East European countries total more than a quarter of a million, or roughly 1 for every 4 members of the armed forces.

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scheduled early July meeting in Bucharest of the Political Consultative Committee (PCC) which might further demonstrate the fallacy of equating NATO with the WP. [The PCC is composed of each country's top CP, Government, foreign affairs, and defense leaders, and is charged with coordinating all activities of the WP. However, its meetings have been held at 1 1/2-year intervals rather than the minimum of every 6 months or more frequently, as decided in 1956. Furthermore, past PCC meetings have served merely as forums for the articulation of a common stand on important international issues as proposed by the USSR.]

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